

United States Mint Declares New Arkansas Quarter a Natural Beauty from the Natural State

October 28, 2003

25th Quarter Launch Marks Halfway Point for Popular 50 State Quarters Program

Murfreesboro, Arkansas — United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore joined Governor Mike Huckabee and First Lady Janet Huckabee today at Crater of Diamonds State Park to launch the new Arkansas State quarter, celebrating the environmental treasures of the “Natural State.” The Arkansas State quarter also marks a unique and important milestone — the halfway point in the 50 State Quarters Program.

“The sweeping natural beauty of Arkansas clearly and proudly appears on this coin,” said Director Fore. “It is the first United States circulating coin to feature images of rice and a diamond.”

The Arkansas quarter design bears the image of a diamond, rice stalks and a mallard gracefully flying above a lake. The Murfreesboro High School Band provided trumpet fanfare as the new quarter was placed on the large United States map that represents the program. Miss Arkansas 2003 Whitney Kirk and United States Mint mascot “Peter the Mint Eagle” were also on hand as children in the audience received shiny new Arkansas quarters.

“This promises to be a historic day in our State’s history, and we want to mark it with a special event that allows us to celebrate Arkansas’ heritage,” said Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee. “I can think of no place better to do that than the Crater of Diamonds, the only public diamond mine in North America. Our quarter design features the things that make Arkansas unique, and the diamond mine is certainly one of those unique attractions.”

The Arkansas quarter dollar coin is the fifth and final quarter of 2003. Arkansas was admitted into the Union on June 15, 1836. The land was acquired through the Louisiana Purchase and became the Arkansas Territory before gaining statehood.

Arkansas’ Crater of Diamonds State Park is the only diamond mine in the United States that is open to the public. Visitors can search the crater for precious gems, including, of course, diamonds. The state also has an abundance of clear streams and rivers, boasts more than 600,000 acres of natural lakes, and is renowned for its outstanding waterfowl hunting. Arkansas is also the nation’s leading producer of rice. January 2001, Governor Huckabee announced the Arkansas Quarter Challenge as a statewide competition. There were 9,320 entries. After several rounds of elimination, the Governor forwarded three concepts to the United States Mint, including Arkansas’ natural resources and the State Capitol building. The United States Mint returned four candidate designs to the Governor based on the concepts he had submitted. He chose the natural resources design.

The United States Mint’s collectible five-coin proof sets featuring all five state quarters for 2003 and other popular 50 State Quarters products are available on the United States Mint’s website, www.usmint.gov, and by calling 1-800-USA-MINT.

Launched in 1999, the United States Mint’s 50 State Quarters Program is a 10-year initiative that honors each of the states in the order they were admitted into the Union. Each quarter is produced for about 10 weeks and will never be produced again. Surveys show that more than 130 million adults collect the quarters.

Created by Congress in 1792, the United States Mint is the manufacturer of legal tender coinage for the United States. In FY 2002, the United States Mint manufactured approximately 15 billion coins and generated revenue of \$1.8 billion. For more information, please visit www.usmint.gov. For a digital photograph of the new Arkansas quarter, please visit: <http://www.usmint.gov/pressroom/index.cfm?action=photo#SQ2003>.

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